

Testimony of [your organization/business, if any, or your name]
Before the Commerce Committee

In Support of
HB 6528, AAC CLEAN MARINAS

Submitted by
[Your name] Meghan smith
March 7, 2013

Senator LeBeau, Representative Perone, and members of the Committee,

[Business or organization is; or I am] pleased to have the opportunity to comment on House Bill 6528, An Act Concerning Clean Marinas. I support this bill, which establishes a cost-sharing program that will help marinas and boatyards certified by the Connecticut DEEP's Clean Marina Program apply for small grants to assist with dredging of their channels.

Add details about why this is important to you. (Are you a boater? Do you care about Long Island Sound's water quality and want to support marinas that take steps to protect it? Do you own, work at, or belong to a clean marina or a marina that's had difficulty affording maintenance dredging?)

Currently, obtaining assistance for marina dredging projects is exceptionally difficult. This means that many marinas cannot afford this costly work, so their channels gradually accumulate silt and can eventually become impassible to boats with deeper drafts. Sharing the cost will make dredging feasible for more marinas, thereby keeping those businesses open and profitable, as well as creating new jobs for engineers and local dredging contractors.

This bill will link significant support for dredging projects directly to a program that helps protect Long Island Sound. By tying the assistance to the Clean Marina Program, HB 6528 encourages marinas and boatyards to use business practices that protect our water quality. Connecticut's marinas are in a unique position to reduce water pollution from runoff of oils, soaps and waxes, as well as sewage, and to set an example for other shoreline businesses. In addition, they play an educational role, helping to raise awareness of sustainable boating practices among recreational and commercial boaters.

There are currently about 30 certified Clean Marinas in Connecticut, and another 20 that have pledged to make the necessary changes to get certified. This cost-sharing program will reward their efforts, encourage them to maintain their commitment, and incentivize other marinas and boatyards to follow suit.

Last year, this concept was raised in SB 220 and enjoyed strong support from legislators, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, marinas and boatyards, and environmental advocates. This year's version needs one technical fix: the language in section 2 should be changed from "or any federal or state agency acting on behalf of such municipality" back to the version in last year's amendment, "federal agency or other entity."

Please support HB 6528 for the environmental, economic and recreational benefits it offers Connecticut's shoreline communities and Long Island Sound. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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